

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LISBON 04608 241122Z

42

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

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R 241030Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0842

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

UNCLAS LISBON 4608

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, PFOR, PO, US

SUBJ: PORTUGUESE PRESS REACTION TO COSTA GOMES US VISIT

REFS: (A) LISBON 4556 (B) LISBON 4555

SUMMARY: PRESS COVERAGE OF PRESIDENT'S TRIP WAS EXTENSIVE, PRESS' ANALYSIS WAS THAT RESULTS WERE OUTSTANDING, PRESS' OVERALL TREATMENT OF POTENTIALLY DIFFICULT MATTERS WAS CIRCUMSPECT. END SUMMARY

1. COSTA GOMES' TRIP TO NORTH AMERICA WAS HEADLINE NEWS FOR THREE SUCCESSIVE DAYS IN THE PORTUGUESE PRESS, HIS UN APPEARANCE COMPETING WITH WASHINGTON CONVERSATIONS ON FIRST DAY ONLY. UNANIMOUS PRESS CONCLUSION IS THAT TRIP WAS N OUTSTANDING SUCCESS, THAT US RESERVATIONS ABOUT POST-SEPTEMBER 28 DEVELOPMENTS HAVE BEEN DISPELLED, AND THAT PORTUGAL CAN COUNT ON NEEDED ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FROM UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 LISBON 04608 241122Z

HER AMERICAN ALLY. PRESIDENT'S BRIEF AIRPORT COMMENTS UPON

HIS RETURN (REFTEL A) REINFORCED THESE IMPRESSIONS, ADDING THE THEMES OF SOLID PORTUGUESE-NATO TIES AND IMPORTANT PORTUGUESE-LUSO AMERICAN RELATIONS TO THOSE OF PORTUGAL'S RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES AND THE UN.

2. ASIDE FROM THSE BASIC CONCLUSIONS, PRESS ALSO FOCUSED OR COMMENTED ON FOLLOWING:

A. PRESIDENT FORD'S UNANTICIPATED INVITATION TO COSTA GOMES TO STAY IN BLAIR HOUSE, A GESTURE INTERPRETED AS A FRIENDLY ONE, NOT REQUIRED BY PROTOCOL, OFFERING " CLEAR PROOF OF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT'S SYMPATHY FOR PORTUGAL."

B. FORMIN SOARES ASSURANCE TO PORTUGUESE JOURNALISTS THAT US WAS NOT INDIFFERENT TO QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT PORTUGAL DEVELOPS INTO A PLURALISTIC DEMOCRACY.

C. AMBASSADOR THEMIDO'S REMARK DISCOUNTING DANGER POSED TO PORTUGAL BY CIA. IN "POST-WATERGATE" ERA, US PUBLIC OPINON AND US MASS MEDIA CONSTITUTE MAJOR OBSTACLE TO FUTURE CIA ADVENTURISM ABROAD.

D. PORTUGUESE EMBASSY'S EXPLANATION OF POSITION (PROSPEROUS, HARDWORKING) AND ATTITUDES (CONSERVATIVE, ALARMED) OF LUSO-AMERICAN COMMUNITY. EMBASSY SPOKESMAN WAS QUOTED AS SAYING PORTUGUESE AMERICANS COUNT ON BEING ALLOWED TO VOTE IN UP-COMING ELECTONS AND "IT WOULD BE A GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT SHOULD THEY BE PREVENTED FROM VOTING."

3. FLYSPECKS: AT LEAST TWO MATTERS COULD HAVE PROVOKED ADVERSE OR EXAGGERATED PRESS REACTION: HANDLING OF COSTA GOMES' ARRIVAL AT JFK (REFTEL B) AND SECRETARY KISSINGER'S QUESTION TO SOARES REGARDING WHEN COSTA GOMES WOULD ADDRESS THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY. PRESS DID NOT PICK UP ON FIRST OF THESE ("BAD WEATHER" EN ROUTE EXPLAINING ALL). THE KISSINGER REMARK, WHERE REPORTED, CAME ACROSS IN FAIRLY LOW-KEY FASHION.
SCOTT

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